

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 SS-20 NSC-10 SPC-03 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01

NIC-01 DRC-01 /088 W

----- 029013

R 191130Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9069

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE GEORGETOWN 1695

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, GY

SUBJECT: NEW PROPOSALS AT SPECIAL CONGRESS OF GUYANA'S RULING
PEOPLE'S NATIONAL CONGRESS

REF: GEORGETOWN 1675

1. ON NOVEMBER 10TH AND 11TH RULING PEOPLE'S NATIONAL CONGRESS (PNC) HELD SPECIAL CONGRESS IN GEORGETOWN SIMILAR TO TYPICAL ANNUAL CONGRESS IN THAT IT DOMINATED BY PARTY LEADER AND PRIME MINISTER FORBES BURNHAM. MORE THAN ANYTHINGELSE, CONGRESS WAS OPPORTUNITY FOR EXPOSING PARTY ACTIVITS TO THINKING OF THEIR LEADER WHO DELIVERED LONG OFF-THE-CUFF SPEECHES BOTH DAYS. BURNHAM REPEATED FAMILIAR COMMENTS ON PNC'S JULY 16 ELECTION VICTORY, CURRENT STATE OF COUNTRY, AND GUYANA'S POSITION IN WORLD. IN ADDITION SEVERAL NEW THEMES WERE INTRODUCED INCLUDING PLAN FOR NATIONAL SERVICE (AS REPORTED REFTEL) AND SCHEMES FOR RE-ORGANIZATION OF PARTY AND FOR PRIMARY SYSTEM TO SELECT CANDIDATES.

2. RE-ORGANIZATION OF PARTY--IN ADDRESS TO DELEGATES FIRST DAY OF CONGRESS, BURNHAM PROPOSED PNC HAVE "EXCLUSIVE MEMBERSHIP."
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THIS WOULD MEAN, HE EXPLAINED, ALL NEW PARTY MEMBERS TO BE ON

ONE YEAR PROBATION IN COOPERATIVES, SELF-HELP PROJECTS, AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT WOULD BE EVIDENCE OF WORTHINESS FOR MEMBERSHIP. FOR THOSE SHARING PARTY'S GOALS BUT NOT PARTICIPATING IN PARTY ACTIVITIES, BURNHAM SUGGESTED ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP. PNC LEADER SAID TIGHTENING UP OF MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS DESIGNED TO SHAKE PARTY OUT OF COMPLACENCY FOLLOWING ELECTION VICTORY AND TO ELIMINATE "BANDWAGONERS."

3. IN DISCUSSIONS WITH EMBOFF, PNC ASSISTANT SECRETARY MARGARET ACKMAN FURTHER ELABORATED ON NEED FOR EXCLUSIVE MEMBERSHIP. SHE COMPLAINED TOO MANY PERSONS HAVE IDEA THAT PNC MEMBERSHIP CARD AUTOMATICALLY ENTITLES THEM TO JOB, HOUSE, OR OTHER FAVORS. ACKMAN ADDED EXCLUSIVE MEMBERSHIP IS ALSO NECESSARY TO ELIMINATE "SABOTEURS" FROM PARTY. CITING CASE OF SUPPOSED PNC ACTIVIST FOUND REPORTING TO JANET JAGAN, KEY OPPOSITION PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY LEADER, ACKMAN STATED YEAR'S PROBATION WOULD CUT DOWN ON LEAKING OF INFORMATION AND SABOTAGE OF PARTY ACTIVITIES.

4. PRIMARY ELECTIONS--ON ANOTHER ASPECT OF PARTY REFORM, BURNHAM CALLED FOR CONSIDERATION OF NEW SYSTEM TO SELECT CANDIDATES FOR NATIONAL OFFICE. OFFERING FEW DETAILS, BURNHAM SUGGESTED INTRODUCTION OF PRIMARY ELECTIONS, SIMILAR TO THOSE IN U.S., TO ENSURE RESPONSIBILITY OF PARLIAMENTARIANS TO THOSE WHO ELECT THEM.

5. ACKMAN SAID LATER THAT ONE IDEA FOR PRIMARY SYSTEM IS TO DIVIDE NATION INTO CONSTITUENCIES FOR SELECTION OF CANDIDATES. THIS WOULD STIMULATE GREATER "GRASS ROOTS" INVOLVEMENT AND PROVIDE MORE DIRECT LINK BETWEEN PARLIAMENTARIAN AND VOTER. NATIONAL ELECTION WOULD CONTINUE TO BE CONDUCTED UNDER PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION WITH ENTIRE NATION AS SINGLE CONSTITUENCY. ACKMAN ADDED EVERYTHING STILL UP TO PRIME MINISTER AND SPECIFIC PROPOSALS WILL PROBABLY BE EXAMINED AT 1974 ANNUAL CONGRESS IN SPRING.

6. COMMENT: IN ADVANCING PROPOSALS (IE. NATIONAL SERVICE, NEW MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS, PRIMARY SYSTEM) BURNHAM APPEARS TO BE LOOKING FOR NEW WAYS TO MOBILIZE BOTH PARTY AND NATION, UNDER HIS CONTROL, TO PURSUE FRUSTRATINGLY ELUSIVE DEVELOPMENT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GOALS, IN THIS TASK, HE FACES NOT ONLY CONTINUED POLITICAL OPPOSITION FROM ANTI-GOVERNMENT FORCES BUT ALSO INDIFFERENCE AND INDISCIPLINE OF MOST GUYANESE, EVEN THOSE WITHIN HIS PARTY. KING

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEMBERSHIP, PARTY MEETINGS, PARTY LEADERS, POLITICAL SITUATION, PARTY ORGANIZATION, ELECTION CANDIDATES, NATIONAL ELECTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 NOV 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: hilburpw
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973GEORGE01695
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: GEORGETOWN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731126/aaaaasvd.tel
Line Count: 111
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: GEORGETOWN 1675
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: hilburpw
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23-Jan-2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <31-Jan-2002 by hilburpw>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NEW PROPOSALS AT SPECIAL CONGRESS OF GUYANA'S RULING PEOPLE'S NATIONAL CONGRESS
TAGS: PINT, GY, PEOPLES NATIONAL CONGRESS, (BURNHAM, FORBES), (ACKMAN, MARGARET)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005